

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Full Council Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2019

Members Present

Bob Kresmer
Amy Porterfield
Ted Chittenden
George Martinez
Mike Gordon
Jim LaMay
Ed Gervasoni
Janet Fisher
Bea Shapiro
Nathan Pullen

Members Absent

Allan Curry
Donald Porterfield
Annette Reichman

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Kristen Mackey
Sue Kay Kneifel
Karla Rivas-Parker
David Steinmetz
Terri Hedgpeth
Doris Woltman
Lisa Yencarelli
Milly Martinez

Call to Order and Introductions

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m. in the RSA Video Conference Rooms located in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. Introductions were made, a quorum was present, and the procedural meeting rules were explained.

Approval of March 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Ted Chittenden moved to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2019 GCBVI Full Council meeting as written. Bea Shapiro seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by majority voice vote.

GCBVI Chairperson's Report

Bob Kresmer stated that Amy Porterfield developed a Policy Workgroup that met with Kristen Mackey and Sue Kay Kneifel to discuss the Services to the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) staff training and Ms. Porterfield would give a full report regarding that meeting. Bob Kresmer stated he also attended an Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) Board regarding some issues with the campuses and the co-operatives. Bob Kresmer stated that Executive Committee members would be conducting interviews for potential council members as well. Bob Kresmer stated that the Department of Economic Security (DES) developed videos featuring different staff members, and he would like to show the video featuring Kristen Mackey.

Bob Kresmer stated the Executive Committee would like to put Terri Hedgpeth's application forward to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commission. Bea Shapiro motioned that Terri Hedgpeth's application be moved forward to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commission. Ed Gervasoni seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

RSA Administrator's Report

Kristen Mackey, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Administrator reviewed the RSA and SBVID metrics **(See Attachment A)**. Kristen Mackey stated that 201 individuals had been released from the Order of Selection wait list in the beginning of the month. Kristen Mackey stated that an individual determined eligible for services in Priority One, would begin receiving services, and individuals in Priority Two would remain on the wait list until the next pull. Ms. Mackey stated RSA would continue to release approximately 100-150 individuals off the wait list, while ensuring there were enough staff and funding to provide the services. Bob Kresmer inquired whether Priority Three was open. Kristen Mackey stated that Priority Three was open with about 300 individuals.

Kristen Mackey stated that RSA approaching the end of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) and had started planning for the next SFY. Kristen Mackey stated the SBVID Program Manager position had been approved and was currently

going through the HR process. Kristen Mackey noted that staff vacancies remained relatively stable, although there had been some retirements and promotions, which was at approximately 7%. She noted that RSA had not received the Federal RSA report, and RSA had recently been assigned a new Federal Liaison. Kristen Mackey stated the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) had been approved to expand the café in the DES cafeteria. She noted the federal regulation that required prior approval for any equipment or service over \$5000, although RSA and BEP could submit an aggregate amount for the proposed amount that would be spent. Ms. Mackey stated that Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) submitted four requests, in which only one request had been denied. Kristen Mackey stated there had been some resignations in the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) unit, and RSA was examining the budget to identify whether there could be an increase in salaries or direct client services. Kristen Mackey stated that OIB was not a robust federal project, and RSA would continue to review those funds to best serve the clients. She added the under 54 Program was not a supported program, therefore RSA estimated that VR would not continue to serve individuals in the next fiscal year. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA would roll those funds into the OIB bucket to increase salaries and direct client services. Jim LaMay inquired whether there were funds for individuals under 54. Kristen Mackey stated the funds had been reallocated as discretionary funds. Ted Chittenden inquired regarding the current state budget for VR and the federal matching funds. Kristen Mackey stated the budget had not been approved yet, although RSA did not anticipate a change to the funds. Bob Kresmer inquired whether RSA had requested additional funds in the upcoming budget. Kristen Mackey stated that DES approved of the budget that was submitted to the Office of Budget. Terri Hedgpeth inquired regarding the number of OIB staff. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that OIB currently had 11 staff. Amy Porterfield inquired whether the discretionary funds would be moved from below the line to be above the line. Kristen Mackey stated the funds for Under 54 were below the line and would be potentially moved to client funds below the line and potentially above the line for OIB. Amy Porterfield inquired regarding the purchase of equipment for OIB clients. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had over 1 million in equipment, and she would like to see that equipment used by clients. Amy Porterfield noted that each client would have a need for specific equipment and would not necessarily coincide with the equipment in the warehouse. Kristen Mackey agreed and stated that RSA would approve of the purchase of equipment for VR clients. Bea Shapiro inquired whether the equipment was for OIB and VR clients. Kristen Mackey stated the line item would have to be adjusted for VR clients.

Jim LaMay stated that the council members had discussed scheduling a meeting with the providers and RSA regarding the contracts. Mr. LaMay also

stated his concern that several of the Orientation to Blindness Workshops had been canceled in the past. Kristen Mackey stated that she spoke to the Contracts staff and there was concern regarding potential vendors having insight regarding the new contracts. Ms. Mackey noted that if vendors received information regarding the contracts, those vendors would have to recuse themselves from bidding on those contracts. Jim LaMay stated that authorizations for clients were lagging, and he was concerned that the vendors were unable to communicate with Knowledge Services. Kristen Mackey clarified that Knowledge Services was the company name and they provided the Managed Service Provider (MSP) services and both names were used. Ms. Mackey stated that she did not recommend that VR services be managed under the MSP. Amy Porterfield stated the Policy Workgroup developed a draft survey that would be administered to vendors and inquired regarding the status of that survey. Kristen Mackey stated the survey would be put on pause while the RSA Contracts Unit identified how to share information with the vendors. Amy Porterfield stated that the providers could meet with RSA to discuss issues but would not necessarily need to discuss the contract. Kristen Mackey stated her understanding that the CRP meetings were scheduled quarterly and inquired whether the vendors attended those meetings. Ms. Mackey noted that counselors and supervisors attended those meetings and vendors could attend and discuss any questions or concerns. Amy Porterfield stated that she had attended those meetings in the past, although staff were generally not prepared to have discussions regarding specialized services. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA could potentially schedule a meeting with RSA staff to discuss specialized services after the CRP meeting.

SBVID Program Manager Report

Sue Kay Kneifel reviewed the SBVID metrics **(See Attachment A)**. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that SBVID developed and hired a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Blind (RCB) to assist the Gilbert/Chandler office, who would begin on June 3, 2019. Sue Kay Kneifel stated SBVID finalized a transfer for a Purchasing Technician (PT) for the Tucson office. Ms. Kneifel stated that Beverly Reghabi's positions had been filled. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that SBVID offered the Tucson Supervisor position to an applicant, who turned down the position. She added that SBVID would begin the application again and would identify how to provide coverage for that office until the position was filled.

Jim LaMay inquired whether individuals were placed into comprehensive programs that did not attend the Orientation to Blindness workshops. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that clients either received a one-on-one orientation or went through as a group. Jim LaMay stated that the past three workshops

had been canceled and he had seen approximately two individuals. Amy Porterfield stated that if 61 individuals applied for VR services, and approximately 15-16 individuals went through the Orientation to Blindness, then there was a disparity in the services. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that SBVID could have lost contact with individuals, and that not all 61 individuals were seeking comprehensive services. Amy Porterfield stated that all clients should have informed choice to decide the types of services they required. Sue Kay Kneifel stated her agreement, although some clients were not ready to accept their position or understand their need for additional services. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that SBVID was in the process of identifying a single point of contact for each region to track the referrals so that staff could track the number of referrals compared the number that were receiving services. Sue Kay Kneifel stated she was also working with the vendors and would like to know of any concerns regarding authorizations. Mike Gordon stated that SBVID was in the process of reposting the Tucson Supervisor position and required regarding the timeline for that position being filled. Kristen Mackey stated that she was working with HR to assign a staff member to that office temporarily, while the position was reposted, although she did not have an estimated timeline.

Karla Rivas-Parker stated for 55 and over, ILB received 311 referrals, for VR, OIB received 29 referrals and for 54 and under, ILB received 21 referrals. Karla Rivas-Parker stated the ILB wait list was open for individuals waiting for Orientation and Mobility, Assistive Technology or VR services. She noted that 47 individuals were waiting for rehabilitation teaching services, 39 were waiting for O&M, 38 were waiting for AT and 3 were waiting for Orientation and Adjustment to Disability services. Ted Chittenden stated the funding for 54 and under would be moved to individuals 54 and over and inquired regarding the 21 individuals in the under 54 category. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that all individuals were receiving services except for one individual and she had encouraged all clients to receive services before June 30, 2019. Jim LaMay inquired whether ILB would continue to collect statistics for individuals under 54. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that she would continue to receive referrals and collect that information. She noted that ILB would discuss strategies to identify how to provide those services to clients. Kristen Mackey stated the council might consider identifying a method to refer those individuals to alternate resources. Bob Kresmer stated that he received 1-800 calls through the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and was told that he could only refer individuals to Karla Rivas-Parker's unit to distribute the information and inquired whether that process would change. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that process had changed several years prior, because vendors were entering incorrect information into the system and ILB was not able to offer services in a timely manner. Jim LaMay stated that historically, the community providers could authorize and provide services to

IL individuals on the wait list. Kristen Mackey stated her understanding that the service was provided out of grant funding, although the challenge was to enter the information correctly. Ms. Mackey suggested that Karla Rivas-Parker's unit and some of the vendors review that process. Amy Porterfield stated that she would also be interested in revisiting training guidelines and processes.

BEP Program Update

Nathan Pullen stated that BEP was in the process of developing standard metrics like the metrics developed under the Arizona Management System (AMS). Mr. Pullen stated that BEP did not have significant fluctuation, although BEP could track the number of licensees, trainees, site surveys and the number of sites that were accepted. Nathan Pullen stated there were currently 25 operators, 8 licensees, 2 trainees, 2 site visits and 5 were approved. Nathan Pullen stated that the 2 trainees were doing well and would receive some follow up training prior to bidding on facilities. Nathan Pullen stated the upcoming bids were a cafeteria at the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), a vending site at the DEQ, a vending route at Pinal County, Yuma and Lake Havasu. Nathan Pullen stated there was a potential bid with Knight Transportation, and BEP would begin services to the concession stand to the Foothills Aquatic Center.

Nathan Pullen stated there was a push nationally sponsored by Tom O' Halleran to allow for the opening of commercialization of highway rest areas. Mr. Pullen stated the bill would support funding of infrastructure nationally. Nathan Pullen stated the concern was that the bill would displace smaller businesses such as gas stations, smaller restaurants, and BEP operators. Nathan Pullen stated that BEP was opposed to the bill, and he would participate in a Fly-In in Washington D.C. and would hopefully be able to discuss the issue with Mr. O' Halleran. Nathan Pullen stated that BEP was in the process of revising the BEP policies and had drafted several changes to the Arizona code, which would allow operators to change the set-aside rate. He noted that BEP would require approval through the Legislature. Nathan Pullen stated that BEP would be expanding the DES cafeteria and installing a Starbucks coffee shop. Nathan Pullen stated there was a recent issue in Mohave County, which prompted a request to review the law. Ted Chittenden inquired whether the Governor had taken a stance regarding the vending rest stop proposal. Nathan Pullen stated that he did not have an official response from the Governor's Office, although the Governor had expressed support of the proposal in the past. Nathan Pullen noted that he was not encouraging the council to take a stance on the issue and was just providing the information. Bob Kresmer stated the council could not take a stance on the issue on behalf of the council, although council members as

community members could contact O' Halleran's office. Ted Chittenden suggested that Bob Kresmer and/or Amy Porterfield request an official position through Christina Corieri.

ASDB Report

Lisa Yencarelli stated there were 6 students graduating from the ASDB campus program and 2 students were graduating from the Pima County JTED program. Lisa Yencarelli stated that Superintendent Annette Reichman would be holding a Town Hall meeting in Tucson on May 22, 2019 at 6:00 at the Tucson Deaf Community Center. Lisa Yencarelli stated ASDB continued to work on the statewide Braille production program to offer the system statewide. Lisa Yencarelli stated the program included staff support and ensure staff were present in the areas needed, and that staff were trained to use the equipment. Ms. Yencarelli stated the program would allow the Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI)s to provide more instruction and support in the general education classrooms and to provide services in the classrooms. Lisa Yencarelli stated that ASDB would offer the 2nd Annual AT Institute, where TVIs could receive in service training as well as training throughout the school year. Lisa Yencarelli stated ASDB developed a pilot project for virtual distance learning in the East Highland's Regional Co-Operative primarily for the DHOH students but would expand to students with visual impairments. Lisa Yencarelli stated the ASDB Board would examine the topic of equity within the regional co-operatives, the use of the residential dorms, and the early childhood program. Ted Chittenden inquired regarding the AZ Merit test scores for the blind and visually impaired students. Lisa Yencarelli stated that she did not have the test scores yet, although she would share that information at the next Full Council meeting. Ted Chittenden stated his understanding that the ASDB Board had approved the rental of a building in Sedona. Lisa Yencarelli stated the office space lease in Flagstaff was up, and ASBD found an office space in Sedona for the Northeastern Regional Co-Operative offices. Terri Hedgpeth inquired whether ASDB would be migrating to Google. Lisa Yencarelli stated that ASDB would be migrating to Google. Terri Hedgpeth inquired whether the ASDB Town Hall meeting would allow individuals to call into the meeting. Ms. Yencarelli stated she would find out whether there would be a call-in option for the Town Hall meeting. Bob Kresmer stated the Education Committee had recommended the ASDB Board include council member participation in ASDB workgroups.

GCBVI Committee Reports

Public Policy and Legislative Committee

Policy Workgroup

Bob Kresmer stated the Policy Workgroup of the Public Policy and Legislative Committee met with RSA staff to discuss how the council could provide oversight regarding the SBVID staff training for working with blind and visually impaired clients. Kristen Mackey stated that she supported training to general VR and SBVID staff specific to specialized services. Ms. Mackey stated RSA had discussed immersion activities and quarterly meetings for staff to engage with consumers and providers. Kristen Mackey stated the VR Development Group developed an online training program regarding specialized training information. Kristen Mackey stated during the meeting, they discussed training through Mississippi State, Hadley, and potentially YTAC. Ms. Mackey stated that RSA had not developed a comprehensive training yet, although the Policy Workgroup submitted the training items that counselors should receive. She noted that the training would be included in the Strategic Plan, and she anticipated a robust training by the end of the year. Bea Shapiro inquired whether the training would include instruction for reading eye reports. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had reviewed the previous SBVID training developed by Diane McElmury, which would likely include that information. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the Deaf and Hard of Hearing staff would meet regularly and would receive presentations from professionals such as how to read an audiology report. She noted that the BVI staff could receive similar training regarding eye reports.

Public Information

Ted Chittenden stated the statistics for EyeKnow.AZ were:
March

Number of sessions (visits) 128
Number of individuals visiting website 113
Pages viewed per visit 3:09
Time spent visiting the database (minutes) 1.18
New visitors 86.6%
Returning users 13.4%

April

Number of sessions (visits) 98
Number of individuals visiting website 95
Pages viewed per visit 2.33
Time spent visiting the database (minutes) .18
New visitors 94.8%

Returning Users 5.2%

The GCBVI Facebook statistics were:

April

Page views: 4

Post reach: 35

Post engagements: 21

Likes: 23

Follows: 25

Ted Chittenden stated that he recently learned the National Braille Press would sponsor a Braille Transcribers Conference in November and the Public Information Committee would discuss participation at that event. Mr. Chittenden stated the committee would develop a full Annual Report and he would request the committee reports by June 30, 2019. Ted Chittenden stated that reports could be sent directly to him or to Lindsey Powers.

Assistive Technology

Bea Shapiro stated the AT Committee had met twice and had discussed a collaboration with the Education Committee regarding the need for TVI teachers to receive AT training. Bea Shapiro stated the AT Committee would co-present at the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) with the Employment Committee on a presentation regarding worksite evaluations.

Committee on Deaf-Blind Issues

Ed Gervasoni stated the committee continued to receive updates from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS). Mr. Gervasoni stated the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) began offering Support Service Provider (SSP) services, although the agency was unable to provide transportation to consumers and was using alternate methods such as paratransit and Uber. Ed Gervasoni stated a recent issue arose where the SSPs were unable to provide interpretation services, which included copy signing. Ed Gervasoni stated the ACDHH was working with the Attorney General's Office to review the interpreter policy. Ed Gervasoni stated the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI) had been awarded the I Can Connect program, which would hopefully eliminate barriers. Ted Chittenden inquired whether the SSP interpreter issue was violating a union or state law. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the body for national certification for interpreters made

the distinction that copy signing was interpreting. Ms. Kneifel stated the state licensure law indicates that copy signing was the work of an interpreter, and specifically a Certified Deaf Interpreter, working with an individual with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (CVHL). Sue Kay Kneifel stated that a certified interpreter would receive \$28.00-\$40.00 an hour compared to a SSP earning just above minimum wage. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that Oregon added a level called a Communication Assistant, which could include SSPs. She noted the ACDHH was working with the AG to address the concern in the rules rather than change the statute. Ed Gervasoni stated in the meantime the deaf-blind community continued to be isolated, and unable to access services.

Employment

Nathan Pullen stated that Terri Hedgpeth and David Steinmetz were new members of the Employment Committee. Mr. Pullen stated the Employment Committee was planning for the next event, although the committee did not have a date yet. He noted the committee intended to alternate between events that focused on employers and events that focused on employees or job seekers. Nathan Pullen stated the committee was working on a survey that would be distributed to employers regarding the skills that employers were seeking. Nathan Pullen added that the Employment Committee would provide a co-presentation with the AT Committee at VRATE.

Ex-Oficio Member and Blindness Community Organization Updates

Arizona Talking Book Library

Janet Fisher stated the Summer Reading Program would run from June through August 5, 2019 for youth and adults. Janet Fisher stated the Marrakesh VIP Treaty went into effect on May 8, 2019, although some Legislation was required that would allow the Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) to share materials. Ms. Fisher stated the NLS would offer a Braille e-reader program in 2020 to expand the program to patrons. She stated the NLS would begin a phased pilot to manufacture the Braille e-readers to Humanware with partnership with Baum. Janet Fisher stated the first phase of the project would begin in mid to late 2020.

Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Jim LaMay stated that ACBVI had been awarded a five-year contract with the I Can Connect program for Arizona and parts of New Mexico. He noted that ACBVI would house the equipment made available to low income individuals with CVHL. Jim LaMay stated the contract was administered through the

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Perkins School for the Blind was the contractor for the FCC. Ted Chittenden inquired whether ACBVI would serve individuals in the community, or whether the individuals would need to go to ACBVI for I Can Connect services. Jim LaMay stated ACBVI would provide services to individuals statewide in Arizona and parts of New Mexico. Sue Kay Kneifel recommended the council develop a position paper to encourage the FCC to ensure that AT was more accessible to consumers with CVHL. Bob Kresmer asked that Sue Kay Kneifel send him an email regarding the issue, and he would develop a workgroup.

Arizona Council of the Blind (AzCB)

Ted Chittenden stated the AzCB held the Annual Conference on May 3, 2019 at ACBVI and passed resolutions concerning vending, voting by mail, and support of the creating of a state ADA Coordination position. Ted Chittenden stated that Representative Longden indicated that the ADA Coordinator position did not pass the House of Representatives or Senate, although the bill could potentially become a budget item. Ted Chittenden stated the AzCB National Conference would be in July in Rochester, New York.

National Federation of the Blind of Arizona (NFBA)

Bob Kresmer stated the NFB National Convention would be in Las Vegas and he anticipated that individuals from Arizona would have national scholarships to attend the convention. Bob Kresmer stated the NFB Tucson chapter would hold a dinner for graduating seniors on May 21, 2019.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the GCBVI Full Council will be on July 19, 2019 from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm. in the Video Conference Room, at 515 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Call to the Public

David Steinmetz announced that the VRATE Board was interested to know whether the Education Committee would be presenting at VRATE and to let Dan Martinez know.

Adjournment of Meeting

Ted Chittenden moved to adjourn the meeting. Bea Shapiro seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm

As of March 31, 2019:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 937
The total number of Veterans in VR Program was 37
The total number of individuals in the OOS was 55
The total number of individuals in Priority Two was 22
The total number of individuals in Priority Three was 33
The number of VR applications was 126
The average number of days from application to eligibility was 47
The median number of days application to eligibility was 41
The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 85.9%
The number of new plans written was 124
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 86.4
The median number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 69
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 83.5%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$55.29
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$10.00
The number of clients placed was 29
The number of clients closed successfully was 35

As of March 31, 2019, the Deaf Blind Population statistics:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 41
The total number of Veterans in VR program was 1
The total number of individuals in the OOS was 0
The total number of individuals in Priority Two was 0
The total number of individuals in Priority Three was 0
The number of VR applications was 0
The number of new plans written was 0
The IPE Implementation Compliance within 90 days was 75%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was n/a
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was n/a
The number of clients placed was 1
The number of clients closed successfully was 0